

**PHYSICAL THERAPY BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
INITIAL STATEMENT OF REASONS**

Hearing Date: May 11, 2004

Subject Matter of Proposed Regulations: The use of academic degree initials in written communications following the licensee's name and the use of "Doctor" or "Dr." as a prefix to the licensee's name.

(1) Section(s) Affected: Add section 1398.12

PROBLEM ADDRESSED: There are varying levels of education achieved by those licensed in the physical therapy profession since the academic levels of physical therapy education have advanced from the baccalaureate degree. Therefore, licensure cannot be assumed to be synonymous with the academic degree.

The Ph.D. doctorate in philosophy and now the DSc, doctorate in science, as well as professional doctoral degrees in medicine, dentistry, nursing, education, physical therapy, etc., are all individuals with advanced degrees and are entitled to be referred to as "Doctor".

Equally entitled, the consumer should have the freedom to choose his or her physical therapist based on academic preparation. Therefore, the physical therapist earning the academic title should be identified to the consumer as such by prefixing his or her name with "Doctor" in written communication, including a badge bearing the licensee's name as long as the name is followed by an unabbreviated specification of the applicable doctorate degree held by the licensee or, in spoken communication, the speaker specifies that he or she is a physical therapist.

SPECIFIC PURPOSE: To provide licensees with guidance on the use of academic degrees and the use of the term "Doctor".

FACTUAL BASIS: This section authorizes a physical therapist to use applicable academic degree initials in written communications following the licensee's name and to use the prefix of "Doctor" or "Dr." when earning a doctoral degree. Thereby entitling the consumer the freedom to choose his or her physical therapist based on advanced academic preparation.

UNDERLYING DATA: There is no underlying data.

SMALL BUSINESS IMPACT: These regulations will not have a significant adverse economic impact on businesses.

SPECIFIC TECHNOLOGIES OR EQUIPMENT: This regulation does not mandate the use of specific technologies or equipment.

CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES: No alternative, which were considered, would either be more effective than or equally less burdensome than the proposed regulations.